State Dept. review completed

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY Directorate of Intelligence - . 5 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

ARMY review completed - RIF

The Situation in South Vietnam (As of 1500 EST)

MORI/CDF per C05105250

- 1. The fighting in northern Military Region 1 is continuing at a slower pace, but South Vietnamese forces are organizing counterattacks. Heavy enemy pressure continues, however, against Fire Support Base Pedro West of Quang Tri City, and Quang Tri Combat Base is being shelled sporadically. Further south, enemy artillary and ground attacks are continuing against Firebases Birmingham and Bastogne, West of Hue, but government forces reportedly are still holding their ground.
- 2. The latest reporting indicates that the weather is poor for flying again from Hue to north of the DMZ. Cloud cover and rains reportedly have limited Allied airstrikes and press reports indicate that the weather will remain bad through tomorrow.
- 3. South Vietnamese units in Quang Tri Province are getting ready to launch counter attacks against enemy units north of Dong Ha. General Lam, the government's MR l commander, reportedly plans to begin the operations against the equivalent of three Communist divisions in Quang Tri as soon as additional reinforcements are in position. Nine ranger battalions were airlifted to MR-1 from Tay Ninh Province yesterday to beef up the ARVN 3rd Infantry Division. In addition, an ARVN division from the delta-possibly the 9th-is to be deployed to MR-1. Plans reportedly call for the delta division to go to Quang Nam Province, freeing the 2nd ARVN Division there for duty farther north in Quang Tri.

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4. Lam reportedly has also established a forward command post at Hue to oversee government operations in Thua Thien Province. Some 30,000 regional and popular force troops have been put under the control of the regular army, and 4,000 members of the province's local militia units reportedly are being reorganized to help strengthen local defenses around the former 25X1 imperial capital.

four combat regiments of the North Vietnamese 308th Division are now south of the DMZ.

of the entire 308th Division to northern Quang Tri supports other indications that the enemy is preparing for another round of heavy attacks against government units in Quang Tri Province. Moreover, there are growing indications that elements of the enemy's 324B Division west of Hue are preparing heavy attacks against government positions protecting the approaches to that city. the Communists city. The coordinate their attacks in northern Quang Tri with heavier action against Hue to spread government forces thin and capture both areas.

6. In an assessment of the military situation in MR 1, Consul General Brown in Da Nang reports that none of his contacts is optimistic about the ability of the South Vietnamese 3rd Division to hold off the Communists. He says the "virtuoso performance" of the North Vietnamese artillery has left a profound impression on the South Vietnamese and that government commanders in Quang Tri City do not seem to be moving very expeditiously to get new operations organized. Despite the probability that Lam is getting the equivalent of another division. Brown's contacts question whether the reinforcements will arrive in time or whether they will be adequate.

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## Highlands Autivity

- 7. Communist military activity in the highlands on 4-5 April was largely limited to artillery attacks. A fire base in Kontum Province was shelled and probed by a small ground force. There were three shellings in Pleiku Province, including a five-round rocket attack on the Military Region 2 headquarters in the provincial capital. Four of the large-caliber rockets were duds, however, and the other caused minor damage. South Vietnamese clearing operations north of Dak To on 4 April met enemy resistance. An estimated enemy battalion was engaged in a day-long battle, but casualties were light.
- 8. The South Vietnamese Joint General Staff expects large-scale enemy attacks in the highlands to get underway very soon, with the Kontum City Dak To region as a likely target. Other probable enemy targets include the area along Highway 14 between Kontum and Pleiku cities and to the north of Kontum towards Tan Can.

## North of Saigon

9. Three additional Communist formations have moved into South Vietnam from eastern Cambodia bringing the total number of newly arrived enemy regiments in MR 3 to six. On 5 April, the Communist 9th Division's 272nd Regiment was detected just northeast of An Loc, the capital of Binh Long Province. This regiment and the newly-arrived 6th Regiment were probably involved in the series of attacks against Loc Ninh and An Loc early on 5 April.

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- No Objection to Declassification in Part 2011/10/14 : LOC-HAK-559-30-14-3

- 14. Thiou warned, however, that the Communists' goal is to capture Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, in order to set up a capital for the Viet Cong. The present battle, the President said, is decisive for South Vietnam's survival. He asserted that all necessary measures would be taken to maintain security and to prevent terrorist attacks and other disturbances, and he called on the people to support the common effort. Thieu also called on the press to play up South Vietnamese battlefield successes and to refrain from publishing "false, inaccurate, and exaggerated reports" which could harm the morale of the troops and the political stability of the country.
- 15. Government-controlled media, meanwhile, have been stressing the heavy losses of the enemy, as well as the strong support of the US for South Vietnam. The media have also given heavy play to denunciations of the Communists for invading South Vietnam across the Demilitarized Zone.

## Communist Propaganda

16. Viet Cong negotiator Madame Nguyen Thi Binh has scheduled a news conference in Paris tomorrow morning. Since the suspension of the peace talks, several weeks ago, Communist spokesmen in Paris have been relying heavily on impromptu news sessions to float their latest propaganda. The meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning may be intended to give the other side a better forum to publicize recent Communist gains on the battlefield in South Vietnam.